

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED WEEKLY BY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

How Not to Pay It.

That one who believed the Southern Rebel on just and right, and therefore desired its success, should hate the nation's creditors and let to see the national debt repudiated, is a natural as life. For that debt represents the defeat and ruin of "The Lost Cause."

Now, those who detested the war for the Union because they wished success to secession and slavery, loaned but very little of their money, and hated those who did lend it. They hate them still, and will cheat them out of their dues if they ever have the power.

After all this convincing testimony, it is very probable that the people generally will become satisfied that General Grant is not a negotiatory radical of the Ben. Butler and Ashley school. They will no doubt conclude that he is simply a patriot and a plain honest man, who is resolved to do his duty to his country without regard to the Copperheads who fought him during the war, or the radicals who are fighting him now.

out effect in all directions. Some of them cry out that Grant could not help himself, and that in accepting the office he only obeyed orders, as a soldier must. Some avoid Grant altogether in a gingerly manner, and content themselves with showering abuse on the President. One affects to believe that some "important points" in the Grant-Stanton-Johnson correspondence are "designedly kept back" by the President, and seeks to get over the troublesome affair with a knowing and mysterious shake of the head. One designates the appointment of Grant as a "Jacobin trick," and hints that unless he enters his protest against other acts alleged to be in contemplation by the President, he will "destroy himself," or at least "order in some measure the loss of the practice which has heretofore attached to his name."

But the most curious feature in all this radical perplexity and consternation is the floundering of Greeley. He is as much bothered about Grant's acceptance of the War Office as the Copperhead organ was a short time ago over the Tennessee election. He announces his conviction "in the kindest spirit" that Grant is not a radical of the Ben Butler and Ashley school. He assails Grant, who is a soldier, for not mixing in political controversies and criticizing the acts of the President. He complains that Grant's able report on the condition of the South "effectively" used up a partisan electioneering account got up to radical order by Carl Schurz. He quotes the questionable authority of a Tribune correspondent to prove that President Johnson once said to somebody that General Grant was a supporter of his policy, although Greeley will not hesitate to stamp the statements of the President as not altogether reliable.

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General Grant and His Assaults. An allusion in these columns to General Grant's acceptance of the war portfolio, and the fortunate coincidence of his views with those of the conservative majority in Congress, has provoked a characteristic rejoinder from the Tribune. Our contemporary, as usual, insinuates what it dare not openly allege. It suggests political crimes which it dare not openly charge. It asks, in what it calls "the kindest possible spirit," when General Grant's "habitual reticence" has ever permitted him to declare himself in favor of the reconstruction policy of Congress? It desires to know whether he did not, after an official visit, report upon the progress of restoration at the South under the President's plan? It wishes to know whether some eavesdropper in the scullery at the White House has not heard the President declare his belief that he had the support of General Grant? It demands to know if General Grant did not take part in the Presidential tour to Chicago? And it asks, finally, whether General Grant's acceptance of the Secretaryship did not "so completely disarm Mr. Stanton that he retires!"

These are, in brief, the Tribune's points of attack. They are enlarged upon with that peculiar oiliness of expression and that feigned humility of sentiment which invariably beset the hypocrite and the coward. If the Tribune desires to injure General Grant politically, why has its editor not the manliness to strike an open and fair blow, instead of striking foul? The questions the Tribune asks are the feeblest kind of impertinences. It might, with about equal propriety, ask if General Grant is not committed irresponsibly to the Southern Rebels by using Virginia tobacco? What the country has to do with is not the Acting War Secretary's reticence in the company of radical schemers and wire-pullers, but his promptitude, his discretion, his loyal devotion to the cause of the whole country, and his ability to resist the importunity of radical conspirators and party plotters of every degree.

How cordially General Grant and Secretary Stanton have acted together at every stage of reconstruction (under the laws of Congress) is thoroughly apparent in every part of the correspondence of the War Office with the military district commanders at the South. Where the Secretary suggests and urges additional vigilance for the repression of lawlessness and anarchy, the General simply endorses the circular. Where, again, the General, as in the case of Governor Jenkins, desires to know from the Secretary to what extent the law in the case can be made to operate effectively, the Secretary responds with promptitude, and throughout there is perfect concert of action. So also when the removal of Governor Wells, of Louisiana, the violent editors of New Orleans stated (and stated more than once) that the Tribune is capable of doing what Secretary Stanton and General Grant were in favor of reprimanding Sheridan, Grant's prompt response was this: "There is not one word of truth in the story." As late as the 23rd of June, in one of his despatches for Sheridan's guidance, Grant says: "Enforce your own construction of the Military bill until otherwise ordered." These are but samples—not alone of the constant anxiety which marked the labors of the General at the head of the army in giving effect to the reconstruction laws—but they are samples, as well, of the thorough and steady cooperation of the head of the army with the head of the War Department. It is only the

lowest and meanest kind of malice that could see anything else in the direction of the military business of reconstruction. General Grant, moreover, is not assailed today because he used his influence to thwart the measures of Congress, but because there is an extreme faction at work on the task of laying the wires for the next Presidential election, and because they could better carry out their programme if affairs in the different Executive branches of the Government could be brought to a dead lock. They do not look upon Mr. Stanton's retirement from the standpoint of personal or political regard so far as he is concerned. The leaders of this faction hate Mr. Stanton. He has received as much abuse from the Tribune as from any Copperhead sheet in the South. They profess to admire the ex-Secretary's firmness and patriotism, because they believe that they could have brought about a state of disorder in the military department of the Government if they could have got him to hold on to an office from which he was dismissed by the President, and whose orders he might have disobeyed. The stepping in of General Grant as Acting Secretary for the time they did not reckon upon. They had pictured to themselves a state of disorder and confusion; instead of which the business of the Army Office and the War Department goes on precisely as it did while Mr. Stanton remained in office. The same policy controls it. The acts of Congress will continue to be administered as before. The same military subdivisions will remain at their posts in the Southern military districts, and the only change will be in the tactics of the office-hunting crew, whose Presidential game has been so badly spoiled. They will have to begin with their work anew.

General Sikes and the Charleston Board of Trade—Universal Amnesty. From the N. Y. Herald. General Sikes has addressed to the Board of Trade in Charleston a communication in answer to the protest of that Board against the enforcement of certain of his orders. A double interest attaches to this communication, as an able paper itself and as the subjects of which it treats have just been considered in Cabinet, and decided, as we are somewhat vaguely told, in a sense adverse to the General's views. The document recites distinctly the course of events that resulted in making military law paramount in South Carolina, information very necessary to the Board of Trade—and then points out that the orders in question were issued by the proper military authority purely in the interests of the people, to secure their comfort and prosperity, and to stay legal proceedings that would be annoying and mischievous without securing any good result—that would, in the name of justice, inflict the greatest miseries upon the people. The protest of the Board of Trade is, first, against the General's modification of the whisky trade; second, against his abolition of distress for rent; third, against his order of staying the enforced collection of certain classes of debts. It needs, indeed, only to designate the character of these several orders to see that their purpose could only be that of lightening the present burdens of the people, and the communication referred to abundantly shows the wisdom of the two latter in pointing out that, while relieving poor creditors, they are no actual injury to debtors, since suits enforced at the present time could not secure the creditor a satisfactory remedy and would only render it impossible for the debtor to ever pay. They have the effect of modified and limited bankruptcy acts. This leaves the Board of Trade to stand as the especial representatives and champions of the whisky interest, which they doubtless are; and in the peculiar prominence that the great frauds on the revenue are giving to that interest it will receive but little sympathy. It is to be hoped that the President has not modified the effect of any one of these wise orders.

The progress of events is giving also peculiar weight to another communication from General Sikes—namely, his letter to Senator Trumbull, written some time during the summer and made public just before the close of the last session of Congress. In that letter the Commander of the Second District exposed forcibly certain notable inconsistencies in the state of our laws regarding the South. Radical reconstruction, for instance, gives votes to all the negroes, and it tells the country that this is necessary in order that the votes of these loyal negroes may act as a fair political balance to the votes of the only half loyal Southern whites. The country sees this argument clearly, admits that it is cogent, and the negroes get the votes. Then the radical plan, having thus provided for the nigger, takes up the Southern white man, whom we ought to consider no longer a negro, and whose political power is nullified or balanced by the vote just given to the freedman. Having thus balanced the white man's vote, however, the radical plan next takes it away. Southern white men are disfranchised, and the country is told that this is necessary in order to punish them for rebellion. At this stage the people get puzzled a little. Rebellion is wrong, and treason, and to punish it is right, no doubt. But, then, all the radical political leaders up at the head of the line have managed to let off such head rebels as Davis with no punishment at all. And why, if the worst rebels go free, should the deluded masses be punished with the loss of a freeman's birthright—their vote? But then, if you must and will punish, and in punishing deprive these hundreds of thousands of Southern white men of their votes, what vote is that which you have balanced by giving votes to the negroes? Not these votes which you have taken away from others. Perhaps it may be that this balance is to be used yet against the vote of the Northern white man—the splendid fellow who walked through fire for four years to save the country. The vote of a man who lost his arm at Antietam may be nullified by that of a stalwart chaffet, who hoed the corn that was eaten in Lee's camp at Spotsylvania.

These discrepancies in our plans of reconstruction, one balancing the white man's vote and the other taking it away, were forcibly exposed in the letter in question. General Sikes showed that the two plans together secured too much; that they guaranteed an unnecessary degree of safety to republican principles, and did it at the expense of the good will of the whole mass of the white men and the best interests of the country. His conclusions were expressed in these words: "The true conservative guarantee against rebellion is in the addition made to the loyal vote by the enfranchisement of the colored people. That being done, the occasion for the disqualification clause ceases. Hence, the true solution, I believe, is to declare with universal suffrage a general amnesty, naming the exceptions. A more liberal amnesty is, in my judgment, essential to the success of the Congressional plan of reconstruction." In the same letter it was well argued that these two points between them kept all good men out of office, preventing every community "from securing for the public service men of aptitude and character, whose repentance is as certain as the devotion

of the most consistent loyalist." These are the words of a careful observer—a man who has wisely considered the circumstances and condition of the people and the country. General Sikes was from the first the commander who had the best appreciation of the difficulties of reconstruction, and his letter to Senator Trumbull touches the important point in the right spirit. Universal amnesty must go with universal suffrage, and thus one class of Southern voters will, rightly guided and checked the other; the niggers, perhaps, preventing the dialy tendencies of the whites, and the whites preventing tendencies on the other side less feared but not less dangerous.

Opening on Grant. From the N. Y. Evening Express. There is no peace, no rest for the wicked. What with lamentations over the untimely fate of the martyr Stanton, and the unkind proceedings on the part of General Grant, in stepping into the martyr's shoes, and the rising clamor of the Southern freedmen, for a fair share of the nominations, the offices, and the public plunder, the "party of great moral ideas" bids fair to be swamped in a sea of troubles. Of course, we Copperheads cannot be expected to expend many tears over these tribulations. On the contrary, we may be forgiven, perhaps, the sincere wish that the sea trouble will keep rising and rushing, until the piratical craft goes down with all on board. "Deeper than plummet ever sounded." The cool impudence of the radicals in appropriating Grant to themselves, without even consulting him, indicates at once the assurance and the expectations of the demagogues who are running the Republican machine. Just now we cannot recall any expression or any act of the General susceptible of being twisted into presumptive evidence, even, that he was with the Jacobins. But it suited them to take the thing as a matter of course, and no wonder, therefore, that, having thus made themselves the voluntary victims of self-deception, the more shrewd of them are beginning, as time progresses, to wake up to the possibility that they have been cruelly sold. The chagrin, which is the natural result, finds free vent in the Tribune of Thursday; and now that the feeling is one too strong to be suppressed, we should not be surprised to see a heavy canonading of the General-in-Chief from radical batteries all along the line. Wendell Phillips ("the man who supplies the Republican party with brains") led off in hostile demonstration against him, some time since, but his supporters have not been able to muster sufficient courage, until now, to follow it up. The Tribune article shows that they can hold in no longer. Phillips, we remember, made his boast that, though he would be left to oppose Grant single-handed and alone, for a while, yet ultimately the rest of the party would be obliged to bring up their forces, to unite with him. Herein we have a new proof of the great agitator's wonderful political prescience, and of his intimate knowledge of the real character of the men with whom he is accustomed to act. Phillips is about breaking up camp, in accordance with precedent, the stragglers, the "bummers," and the baggage-smashers, will follow.

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